

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Pending Claims:

1. (currently amended): In a communication system providing a communications link between a calling electronic device and a called electronic device via at least one network, the calling electronic device having access to alternative payment provider data, a method for selecting a payment provider to pay for communication services, the method comprising:

(a) the calling electronic device communicating the alternative payment provider data to the network via a communications link; and

(b) based on the alternative payment provider data, the network contacting a plurality of alternative payment providers in order to find one that will accept responsibility for paying for the communication services, wherein the network examines costs charged by the alternative payment providers and determines the most cost-efficient payment provider.

2. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 further comprising providing the calling electronic device with a subscribing identity module (SIM) card and inserting the alternative payment provider data into said SIM card.

3. (previously presented): The method of claim 2 wherein said SIM card is removably inserted into the calling electronic device.

4. (previously presented): The method of claim 2 wherein the alternative payment provider data entered into the SIM card is transferred to another storage device in the calling electronic device.

5. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said calling electronic device is one of a group of devices including a wireless cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), personal computer (PC), facsimile apparatus and self propelled vehicle.

6. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said network includes a first public land mobile network (PLMN) which is the home network for the calling electronic device and a second PLMN visited by said calling electronic device during a roaming mode, wherein said second PLMN receives said alternative payment provider data from said calling electronic device and forwards said data to said first PLMN for subsequent transfer to a selected one of a plurality of alternative payment providers identified by said alternative payment provider data.

7. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said network comprises a home public land mobile network (PLMN) servicing said calling electronic device, whereby said alternative payment provider data is stored in a storage device in said calling electronic device.

8. (previously presented): The method of claim 7 wherein said calling electronic device is a wireless mobile cell phone, and said storage device is a subscriber identity module (SIM) card, whereby said alternative payment provider data is stored in said SIM card, and said SIM card is removably inserted into said mobile cell phone.

9. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein one alternative payment provider identified by said alternative payment provider data provides credit card services for the calling electronic device and, upon acceptance of said payment request, provides authorization to said network to provide the communication services; and

~~wherein said network, upon receipt of said authorization, provides the communications link requested by the calling electronic device.~~

10. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein one alternative payment provider identified by said alternative payment provider data provides debit card services for the calling electronic device and, upon acceptance of said payment request, provides authorization to said network to provide the communication services; and

~~wherein said network, upon receipt of said authorization, provides the communications link requested by the calling electronic device.~~

11. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein a preferred alternative payment provider identified by said alternative payment provider data provides calling card services for the calling electronic device and, upon acceptance of said payment request, provides authorization to said network to provide the communication services; and

~~wherein said network, upon receipt of said authorization, provides the communications link requested by the calling electronic device.~~

12. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein one alternative payment providers identified by said alternative payment provider data provides pre-

paid calling card services for the ~~user of the~~ calling electronic device and, upon acceptance of said payment request, provides authorization to said network to provide the communication services; and

~~wherein said network, upon receipt of said authorization, provides the communications link requested by the calling electronic device.~~

13. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 further comprising storing subscriber authorization data in the calling electronic device requiring that the network requests ~~the~~ a user of the calling electronic device to authorize the communications link in addition to one of the alternative payment providers accepting responsibility for said payment request, and further including said network requesting said user to provide authorization responsive to receipt of the subscriber authorization data; and

said user transmitting a signal via the calling electronic device to the network responsive to the request for authorization.

14. (previously presented): The method of claim 13 wherein the network, upon receipt of a signal transmitted by the user indicating a refusal to authorize payment, terminates the communications link.

15. (previously presented): The method of claim 13 wherein the network, upon receipt of a signal transmitted by the user indicating authorization of payment, completes the communications link.

16. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said network, responsive to receipt of a request from a user of the calling electronic device ~~said user~~, calculates a cost of establishing a communications link and conveys the

calculated cost to ~~the first~~ an alternative payment provider identified by the alternative payment provider data.

17. (previously presented): The method of claim 16 wherein the calculation takes into account factors affecting a cost of the communications link.

18. (previously presented): The method of claim 17 wherein the calculation determines the time of day, day of week, nature of the information to be transmitted, and distance between calling and called electronic devices.

Claim 19 (canceled)

20. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 ~~19~~ further comprising:
said network contacting the most cost-efficient payment provider requesting authorization to provide the communication services.

21. (currently amended): A communication system for selecting a payment provider to pay for communication services, the system comprising:

at least one network; and

a calling electronic device having access to alternative payment provider data,
wherein:

said calling electronic device communicates alternative payment provider data to said network via a communications link; and

based on the alternative payment provider data, said network contacts a plurality of alternative payment providers to find one that will accept responsibility for paying for the communication services, wherein the network examines costs charged by the alternative payment providers and requests the most cost efficient

one of the alternative payment providers to accept responsibility for paying for the communication services.

22. (previously presented): The system of claim 21 wherein said alternative payment provider data is stored in a subscriber identity module (SIM) card which is removably inserted into the calling electronic device.

23. (previously presented): The system of claim 21 wherein said calling electronic device is one of a group of devices including a wireless cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), personal computer (PC), facsimile apparatus, and self propelled vehicle.

24. (previously presented): The system of claim 21 wherein said network includes a first public land mobile network (PLMN) which is the home network for the calling electronic device and a second PLMN visited by said calling electronic device during a roaming mode, wherein said second PLMN receives said alternative payment provider data from said calling electronic device and forwards said data to said first PLMN for subsequent transfer to a selected one of a plurality of alternative payment providers identified by said alternative payment provider data.

25. (previously presented): The system of claim 21 wherein said network comprises a home public land mobile network (PLMN) servicing said calling electronic device, whereby said alternative payment provider data is stored in a storage device in said calling electronic device.

26. (previously presented): The system of claim 25 wherein said calling electronic device is a wireless mobile cell phone, and said storage device is a

subscriber identity module (SIM) card, whereby said alternative payment provider data is stored in said SIM card, and said SIM card is removably inserted into said mobile cell phone.

27. (previously presented): The system of claim 21 wherein one of said alternative payment providers provides credit card services for the calling electronic device and, upon acceptance of a request for payment from said network, provides authorization to said network to provide the communication services; and

~~wherein said network, upon receipt of said authorization, provides the communications link requested by the calling electronic device.~~

28. (currently amended): The system of claim 21 wherein one of said alternative payment providers provides debit card services for the calling electronic device and, upon acceptance of a request for payment from said network, provides authorization to said network to provide the communication services; and

~~wherein said network, upon receipt of said authorization, provides the communications link requested by the calling electronic device.~~

29. (currently amended): The system of claim 21 wherein a preferred one of said alternative payment providers provides calling card services for the calling electronic device and, upon acceptance of a request for payment from said network, provides authorization to said network to provide the communication services; and

~~wherein said network, upon receipt of said authorization, provides the communications link requested by the calling electronic device.~~

30. (currently amended): The system of claim 21 wherein one of said alternative payment providers provides pre-paid calling card services for the calling electronic device and, upon acceptance of a request for payment from said network, provides authorization to said network to provide the communication services; and ~~wherein said network, upon receipt of said authorization, provides the communications link requested by the calling electronic device.~~

31. (currently amended): The system of claim 21 wherein the data identifying said alternative service providers further includes subscriber authorization data requiring that the network requests ~~the~~ a user of the calling electronic device to authorize the communications link in addition to one of the alternative payment providers identified by the alternative payment provider data accepting responsibility for said payment request, wherein said user transmits a signal via the calling electronic device to the network responsive to the request for authorization.

32. (previously presented): The system of claim 31 wherein said network, upon receipt of a signal transmitted by the user indicating a refusal to authorize payment, terminates the communications link.

33. (previously presented): The system of claim 31 wherein said network, upon receipt of a signal transmitted by the user indicating the user's authorization of payment, completes the communications link.

34. (previously presented): The system of claim 31 wherein said network, responsive to receipt of a request from said user, calculates a cost of establishing a communications link and conveys the calculated cost to an alternative payment

provider identified by the alternative payment provider data.

35. (previously presented): The system of claim 34 wherein the calculated cost takes into account factors affecting a cost of the communications link.

36. (previously presented): The system of claim 34 wherein the calculated cost is determined based on the time of day, day of week, nature of the information to be transmitted, and distance between calling and call parties.

Claim 37 (canceled)

38. (new): In a communication system providing a communications link between a calling electronic device and a called electronic device via at least one network, the calling electronic device having access to alternative payment provider data, a method for selecting a payment provider to pay for communication services, the method comprising:

(a) the calling electronic device communicating the alternative payment provider data to the network via a communications link; and

(b) based on the alternative payment provider data, the network contacting a plurality of alternative payment providers in order to find one that will accept responsibility for paying for the communication services, wherein the network includes a first public land mobile network (PLMN) which is the home network for the calling electronic device and a second PLMN visited by the calling electronic device during a roaming mode, wherein the second PLMN receives the alternative payment provider data from the calling electronic device and forwards the data to the first PLMN for subsequent transfer to a selected one of a plurality of alternative payment providers identified by the alternative payment provider data.

39. (new): In a communication system providing a communications link between a calling electronic device and a called electronic device via at least one network, the calling electronic device having access to alternative payment provider data, a method for selecting a payment provider to pay for communication services, the method comprising:

(a) the calling electronic device communicating the alternative payment provider data to the network via a communications link;

(b) based on the alternative payment provider data, the network contacting a plurality of alternative payment providers in order to find one that will accept responsibility for paying for the communication services;

(c) storing subscriber authorization data in the calling electronic device requiring that the network requests the user of the calling electronic device to authorize the communications link in addition to one of the alternative payment providers accepting responsibility for the payment request;

(d) the network requesting the user to provide authorization responsive to receipt of the subscriber authorization data; and

(e) the user transmitting a signal via the calling electronic device to the network responsive to the request for authorization.

40. (new): The method of claim 39 wherein the network, upon receipt of a signal transmitted by a user of the calling electronic device indicating a refusal to authorize payment, terminates the communications link.

41. (new): The method of claim 39 wherein the network, upon receipt of a signal transmitted by a user of the calling electronic device indicating authorization of payment, completes the communications link.

42. (new): In a communication system providing a communications link between a calling electronic device and a called electronic device via at least one network, the calling electronic device having access to alternative payment provider data, a method for selecting a payment provider to pay for communication services, the method comprising:

(a) the calling electronic device communicating the alternative payment provider data to the network via a communications link; and

(b) based on the alternative payment provider data, the network contacting a plurality of alternative payment providers in order to find one that will accept responsibility for paying for the communication services, wherein the network, responsive to receipt of a request from a user of the calling electronic device, calculates a cost of establishing a communications link and conveys the calculated cost to an alternative payment provider identified by the alternative payment provider data.

43. (new): A communication system for selecting a payment provider to pay for communication services, the system comprising:

at least one network; and

a calling electronic device having access to alternative payment provider data, wherein said network includes a first public land mobile network (PLMN) which is the home network for the calling electronic device and a second PLMN visited by said calling electronic device during a roaming mode, wherein said second PLMN receives said alternative payment provider data from said calling electronic device and forwards said data to said first PLMN for subsequent transfer to a selected one of a plurality of alternative payment providers identified by said alternative payment provider data.